



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 10, 2024

NPR Editor: Leftist Bias Has Wrecked Network's Credibility; Elite White "Progressives" Are Main Audience

A senior editor at National Public Radio says the network's leftist bias has ruined its reputation, and betrayed and alienated its listeners.

Writing at *The Free Press*, NPR's [Uri Berliner](#) [averred](#) that an "open-minded spirit no longer exists within NPR, and now, predictably, we don't have an audience that reflects America."

The 25-year veteran cited three examples of NPR's leftist bent that show not only its bias but also its unwillingness to correct its mistakes: the hate-Trump Russia Collusion Hoax, the claim that Hunter Biden's laptop wasn't a real story, and the insistence that the Covid-19 virus did not leak from a lab.

Berliner wrote that conservatives already knew what NPR is, but he has sallied forth to confirm what they believe. He described a newsroom that sounds more like an American version of *Pravda*, the Soviet propaganda newspaper that toed the party line. And in 2021, he found that not a single Republican worked in its editorial department — but more than seven dozen Democrats did.

And that bias, he concluded, has led to a major erosion of trust.

Conservatives, Moderates Don't Listen

A recipient of the Peabody and Edward R. Murrow awards, Berliner opened his piece by describing the stereotypical NPR listener: "an EV-driving, Wordle-playing, tote bag-carrying coastal elite. It doesn't precisely describe me, but it's not far off. I'm Sarah Lawrence-educated, was raised by a lesbian peace activist mother, I drive a Subaru, and Spotify says my listening habits are most similar to people in Berkeley."

And of course, though the taxpayer-subsidized network "always had a liberal bent," it was never "knee-jerk" leftist.

But "today, those who listen to NPR or read its coverage online find something different: the distilled worldview of a very small segment of the U.S. population."

In 2011, [he wrote](#), 49 percent of listeners were conservative or moderate, while just 37 percent were liberal:

By 2023, the picture was completely different: only 11 percent described themselves as very or somewhat conservative, 21 percent as middle of the road, and 67 percent of listeners said they were very or somewhat liberal. We weren't just losing conservatives; we were also



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losing moderates and traditional liberals.

An open-minded spirit no longer exists within NPR, and now, predictably, we don't have an audience that reflects America.

Russia Collusion; Laptop; China Virus

The network went berserk with the election of Donald Trump, which ended in its wholesale endorsement of the Russia Collusion Hoax [perpetrated by](#) the Clinton Campaign.

"What began as tough, straightforward coverage of a belligerent, truth-impaired president veered toward efforts to damage or topple Trump's presidency," [Berliner wrote](#):

Persistent rumors that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia over the election became the catnip that drove reporting. At NPR, we hitched our wagon to Trump's most visible antagonist, Representative Adam Schiff [Calif.].

Schiff, who was the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, became NPR's guiding hand, its ever-present muse. By my count, NPR hosts interviewed Schiff 25 times about Trump and Russia. During many of those conversations, Schiff alluded to purported evidence of collusion. The Schiff talking points became the drumbeat of NPR news reports.

But when [special counsel Robert Mueller's] report found no credible evidence of collusion, NPR's coverage was notably sparse. Russiagate quietly faded from our programming.

No worries at NPR, though. It never admitted the error. Bad as it is "to blow a big story," he wrote, "what's worse is to pretend it never happened, to move on with no mea culpas, no self-reflection."

Then came the *New York Post's* exposé on [Hunter Biden's infamous laptop](#) in October 2020.

NPR "turned a blind eye."

"We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste the listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions," the managing editor said.

And worse still, NPR's worthies said the network shouldn't cover the laptop story, truth regardless, "because it could help Trump." When the laptop proved authentic, NPR didn't re-evaluate its decision to spike coverage.

The origin of the Covid-19 virus is the third example of NPR's refusal to report the truth.

"Politics also intruded into NPR's Covid coverage, most notably in reporting on the origin of the pandemic," [Berliner wrote](#):

One of the most dismal aspects of Covid journalism is how quickly it defaulted to ideological story lines. For example, there was Team Natural Origin—supporting the hypothesis that the virus came from a wild animal market in Wuhan, China. And on the other side, Team Lab Leak, leaning into the idea that the virus escaped from a Wuhan lab.

The lab leak theory came in for rough treatment almost immediately, [dismissed as racist or a right-wing conspiracy theory](#). Anthony Fauci and former NIH head Francis Collins, representing the public health establishment, were its most notable critics. And that was enough for NPR. We became fervent members of Team Natural Origin, even declaring that



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the lab leak had been debunked by scientists. ...

Over the course of the pandemic, a number of investigative journalists [made compelling](#), if not conclusive, cases for the lab leak. But at NPR, we weren't about to swivel or even tiptoe away from the insistence with which we backed the natural origin story. We didn't budge when the Energy Department—the federal agency with the most expertise about laboratories and biological research—concluded, albeit with low confidence, that a lab leak was the most likely explanation for the emergence of the virus.

Instead, we introduced our coverage of that development on February 28, 2023, by asserting confidently that “the scientific evidence overwhelmingly points to a natural origin for the virus.”

Buys Into Floyd Hoax

Berliner did miss two things. In explaining that NPR fell for the Russia Collusion Hoax, he did not explain that Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign [conceived it](#) to distract the leftist media from her illegally storing classified emails on a private server.

And in introducing the rise of diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI] ideology at NPR, Berliner also repeated the falsehood that George Floyd was “murdered.” [Floyd died](#) of a fentanyl overdose.

That said, the Floyd Hoax led NPR to embark on a crusade to fight the phantom bogeyman of “systemic racism.” The effort would be comical if the network weren't serious about it.

“America's infestation with systemic racism was declared loud and clear: it was a given,” Berliner wrote. “Our mission was to change it”:

“When it comes to identifying and ending systemic racism,” [CEO John] Lansing wrote in a companywide article, “we can be agents of change. Listening and deep reflection are necessary but not enough. They must be followed by constructive and meaningful steps forward. I will hold myself accountable for this.”

Diversity would be the “North Star” of NPR, and “race and identity became paramount in nearly every aspect of the workplace. Journalists were required to ask everyone we interviewed their race, gender, and ethnicity (among other questions), and had to enter it in a centralized tracking system.”

“Unconscious bias training” was part of the routine, and DEI employees wanted to “start talking about race.”

But “most visible was a burgeoning number of employee resource (or affinity) groups based on identity,” Berliner wrote:

They included MGIPOC (Marginalized Genders and Intersex People of Color mentorship program); Mi Gente (Latinx employees at NPR); NPR Noir (black employees at NPR); Southwest Asians and North Africans at NPR; Ummah (for Muslim-identifying employees); Women, Gender-Expansive, and Transgender People in Technology Throughout Public Media; Khevre (Jewish heritage and culture at NPR); and NPR Pride (LGBTQIA employees at NPR).

All this reflected a broader movement in the culture of people clustering together based on



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ideology or a characteristic of birth.

Despite all the different races, religions and “sexual orientations,” though, employees at NPR are united in one thing: hard-left ideology.

“What’s notable is the extent to which people at every level of NPR have comfortably coalesced around the progressive worldview,” [Berliner wrote](#), which has led to “the most damaging development at NPR: the absence of viewpoint diversity.” In 2021 at an editorial meeting, when Berliner reported that 87 Democrats and zero Republicans worked on the editorial side, no one cared.

“Every level of NPR have comfortably coalesced around the progressive worldview,” he wrote, the most damaging development for the network’s credibility:

There’s an unspoken consensus about the stories we should pursue and how they should be framed. It’s frictionless — one story after another about instances of supposed racism, transphobia, signs of the climate apocalypse, Israel doing something bad, and the dire threat of Republican policies. It’s almost like an assembly line.

The mindset prevails in choices about language. In a document called NPR Transgender Coverage Guidance — disseminated by news management — we’re asked to avoid the term biological sex. (The editorial guidance was prepared with the help of a former staffer of the National Center for Transgender Equality.) The mindset animates bizarre stories — on how The Beatles and bird names are racially problematic, and others that are alarmingly divisive; justifying looting, with claims that fears about crime are racist; and suggesting that Asian Americans who oppose affirmative action have been manipulated by white conservatives.

To his credit, Berliner has been fighting to stop hard-left spin, and noted that he repeatedly tried to stop NPR from calling Florida’s recent [education measure](#), passed to stop homosexual propaganda in the schools, the “Don’t Say Gay” bill because “it didn’t even use the word gay.”

He also wants NPR to stop using “Latinx,” which Hispanics can’t stand.

Problem is, nothing changes. His efforts to pursue viewpoint diversity have failed.

Amusingly, and despite the diversity in the newsroom, NPR’s audience isn’t just monolithically leftist.

“Despite all the resources we’d devoted to building up our news audience among blacks and Hispanics, the numbers have barely budged,” [he wrote](#):

In 2023, according to our demographic research, 6 percent of our news audience was black, far short of the overall U.S. adult population, which is 14.4 percent black. And Hispanics were only 7 percent, compared to the overall Hispanic adult population, around 19 percent. Our news audience doesn’t come close to reflecting America. It’s overwhelmingly white and progressive, and clustered around coastal cities and college towns.

Yet Berliner’s chief concern is that Americans no longer trust the media, notably in this case, NPR.

Its executives, he wrote, bragged that a Harris Poll of listeners showed they trusted NPR more than



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they trusted CNN and *The New York Times*. But that number was just 3 in 10.

“Only in a world where media credibility has completely imploded,” he concluded, “would a 3-in-10 trustworthy score be something to boast about.”



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